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# **'Global themes in Early Childhood Education'**

**Quality and pre-school pedagogic practice - reflections on the visual analysis of young children and the Integrated Child Development Service in Mumbai slums.**

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## **Abstract**

Quality early childhood education (ECE) is on the international agenda. Goal 1 of the six internationally agreed 'Education for All' goals enshrined in the Dakar Framework raised the need for its expansion especially for the most vulnerable and disadvantaged children (EFA Goal 1). Since that agreement a shift has occurred from expansion to a concern for its actual quality in the 2007 Global Monitoring Report. The paper reflects upon the possibilities of using researcher generated visual data to identify questions about pedagogic practice and pre-school quality. Through the analysis of visual data from pilot work conducted in six anganwadis (under the Integrated Child Development Service - ICDS) within two Mumbai slums, Bernstein's ideas about social relations in pedagogic practice are used to explore the kinds of modalities of pedagogic practice that operate within the early childhood curriculum of the ICDS settings, and the possible assumptions underpinning those forms of pedagogic practice in terms of how the young child is viewed as a learner. The analysis indicates that researcher-generated visual data is a way of gaining orientation that informs the identification of contextually grounded micro research questions about quality pre-school education.

## 1. Introduction

The 2011 edition of the GMR observes that ECE remains a neglected EFA goal. It states that although participation in pre-primary education (usually for children aged 3 and above) has been increasing, the expansion is slow and uneven, with the pre-primary Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER) remaining at 44%, suggesting that many children remain excluded from pre-primary education (UNESCO 2010 : 33). In addition expansion of ECE programmes has largely been to the benefit of urban, well-to-do groups, thus both denying such programmes to the most disadvantaged children (e.g. of poor and rural families and those with disabilities) who have the most to gain from them and increasing the gap in school readiness between the rich and the poor and between urban and rural populations (UNESCO 2011: 6). In this respect:

The important parenthetical part of this (Goal 1) goal, ‘especially for the most vulnerable and disadvantaged children, has been less successfully met’. (UNESCO 2011: 6)

The inability to participate in any quality preschool education has been named a ‘Zone of Exclusion’ from the goal of ‘Education for All’ (Lewin 2007). Of course the problem of access to quality pre-school provision may in part be explained by the view that more often than not it is the normative component of the concept of quality that is used. As a consequence quality often refers to the *degree of excellence* of something that is used, that this is in turn judged or measured against other things, and in this respect discussions and policies on ‘quality in education’ become value-laden with respect to judging the degree of excellence as well as determining what to measure or compare it against (Nikel and Lowe 2010: 590-591). In response to this concern, the EdQual framework for quality draws attention to the need for contextualising an understanding of quality primarily through the identification of gaps and relationships between contexts of policy, school and home/community in which coherence is underpinned by principles of social justice (Tikly and Barrett 2013). This paper focuses solely upon the pre-school context taking the example of the Indian Integrated Child Development Service (ICDS).

The paper explores the ways in which theory and a visual data collection method can inform one another in the development of contextually led questions about quality pre-schooling in the ICDS. Drawing upon the application of Bernstein's analysis of social relations that exists in any pedagogic practice, I examine the kinds of modalities of pedagogic practice that operate in the early childhood curriculum within the ICDS settings that were visited and the possible assumptions underpinning those forms of pedagogic practice in terms of how the young child is viewed as a learner.

In the consideration of early childhood settings, visual data can be used as a way of exploring the system of signs that make up the culture of pre-school settings. Such data might be of particular interest in relation to pre-school pedagogy, because pre-school activities do not always look like organized pedagogy. Bernstein (1975) for example, uses the term 'invisible' pedagogy for that which may be practiced in pre-schools and infant schools in England. Thus, in considering productions of pedagogic practices that lead to learning, Bernstein located the kinds of messages in English primary schools that existed in the 1960's by examining thirty six photographs included in the influential Plowden Report (an illustration of progressive schooling) entitled 'Children and their primary School' (Plowden 1967 cited in Bernstein 1990/2003). In the photographs:

..there are children playing creatively by themselves: individual, productive play. There are pictures of children playing in groups, there are children in the school corridors and in the gardens surrounding the school, but it is difficult to find a teacher (Bernstein 1990/2003: 67).

The point Bernstein (1990/2003) illustrates is that whilst there may not be an explicitly visible hierarchy between teacher and pupil, there is an implicit one in operation that has created the context that is described. In this respect he argues that the photographs serve to show a desired culture of teaching and learning where the teacher's power acts directly on the context of learning rather than upon the students themselves.

## **2. Curriculum and pedagogic practice**

Bernstein's (1975) general model on curriculum and pedagogic practice uses the concepts of classification and frame to analyse how three message systems - curriculum, pedagogy and evaluation - are structured so that a message code is realised.

### **2.1 Classification and the curriculum**

Classification is about the way knowledge is configured and it may be configured quite differently to suit what are believed to be the needs of pre-school children compared to when they are older. Strong classification assumes things must be kept apart; it 'refers to a curriculum that is highly differentiated and separated into traditional subjects (Sadovnik 2001:3). Weak classification assumes things must be brought together. If classification is weak, boundaries between contents are blurred:

Classification thus refers to the degree of boundary maintenance between contents  
(Bernstein 1975:88)

### **2.2 Frame and features of social relations**

Within the notion of boundaries, Bernstein's interest lies in the social relations between the 'acquirer' and 'transmitter'. Framing concerns social relations in the pedagogic encounter between 'acquirer' and 'transmitter', is related to the strength of boundary, and 'refers to the locus of control over the interactional and locutionary features' (Daniels, 1989 : 125) which can be applied to any encounter considered in terms of relationships and communication and power:

It can refer to the relations between parents and children, between teachers and pupils and between teachers and parents. Strong framing is where the transmitter has explicit control over the communication; weak framing gives the acquirer more apparent control over the communication (Power and Whitty, 2008: 4)

Frame thus refers to that strength of the boundary between what may be transmitted and what may not be transmitted in the pedagogical relationship (Bernstein, 1975: 88). Where framing is strong the range of options and freedoms is limited. Where it is weak, more degrees of freedom are available to

the participants (Atkinson, 1985: 135). Framing is therefore about communication and how control is distributed during communication.

Frame refers to the degree of control teacher and pupil possess over the selection, organisation and pacing of the knowledge transmitted and received in the pedagogical relationship (Bernstein 1975:89)

From this position, all relations are seen as pedagogic relations through which cultural reproductions occur (Daniels *ibid*).

### 2.3 Instructional and regulative discourses in pre-schooling

The conceptual analysis of the curriculum is extended with its attention to accompanying instructional and regulative discourses. Accordingly, in a consideration of pre-schooling as a context, there will be two elements: the first being related to instruction and the second being related to the regulative, associated with social or moral regulation of behaviour. An instructional discourse is a ‘discourse transmitting specialized competencies and their relation to each other’ (Bernstein 1990/2003:183). We might translate this by viewing the ‘business’ of the pre-school lesson as primarily content based. A regulative discourse is concerned with the building of social and moral relationships. Children learn to interact with one another in certain ways and in such a discourse the teacher may aid this process through specific kinds of classroom social relations such as group and discussion work. In this context we might translate the ‘business’ of the lesson as being focused on the teacher and the children discussing ideas.<sup>1</sup> Whilst both framing discourses may often work alongside one another, ‘in any pedagogic exchange both the instructional and regulative discourses operate together’ (Learoyd-Smith 2010:243) that is, an instructional discourse may be embedded within a regulative one. This implies that modalities of pedagogic practice may be implicit (invisible) and explicit (visible) (Bernstein

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<sup>1</sup> The ‘Distar’ (or Direct Instruction) curriculum model which was included in the High/Scope Preschool Curriculum Comparison study beginning in the 1970s (Schweinhart and Weikhart 1997; 2004; 2005), in which three different early childhood curriculum models - High Scope, Direct Instruction and traditional nursery school- were compared (where High Scope offered a powerful justification for high quality pre-school education) displays a number of similar characteristics to the instructional discourse.

1990/2003: 70-71). In distinguishing between that which is visible and that which is not, visible pedagogy always emphasises the child's performance; whereas in invisible pedagogy the acquirer fills the space rather than the transmitter (ibid). It therefore emphasizes acquisition-competence, rather than transmission –performance. These two modalities of educational practice - the competence and the performance model occur in the analysis of classification and framing; where a strong classification and dominant instructional discourse will be associated with a performance model; where '....learners have little control over the selection, sequencing and pacing of the curriculum' (Bourne 2008:3) and Bernstein notes it is where there is a tendency to focus upon what the child is yet to know rather than what skills and knowledge they already process. In the competence model, subjects may be more integrated, learners more active agents of their own learning and the teacher's role may be more facilitative; it is not constrained by power relationships (Invinson and Duveen 2006:111). The model is often an example of a weak classification and regulative discourse.

### **3. Visual data collection and analysis of pedagogic practice**

The visual data used in the analysis for this paper includes: photographs of blackboards and poster displays alongside film and photographs of interaction and activities in six anganwadis (ICDS pre-school settings). Each of the six anganwadis was observed on one occasion as part of a morning's delivery. The observations (using video film and camera) were followed up by focussed interviews with the CDPO (Child development project officer), anganwadi practitioners and supervisors who provided the contextual data that explained their understanding of the purposes of the activities that were filmed and photographed. The information was collated and draft descriptions written. They were discussed with an accompanying Indian co-field researcher who was familiar with the settings, the purpose being to extract contextual information about the images. This is because as an outsider to the cultural setting (Becker 1974) information was necessary beyond that available in the frame of the video film and photographs, in order to provide an understanding of the contextual and structural issues informing the provision available to those children in the slums.



### 3.1 Logging, editing, sampling and analysis of film and photographs

The process of logging and editing enabled a theoretically informed visual analysis. Data logging included for example: the hierarchical rule, regulatory, classification and boundary, modelling and gesture, transmitter and gesture, transmitter acquire relations. Consequently the process of editing and sampling has used a theoretical sample of visual data in order to illustrate transmitter-receiver social relations and the direction and position of who is in control over what. I do not therefore make the claim that the visual data collected is objective in any sense, or that the evidence presented has not been sampled for the purposes of analysis.

## 4. The ICDS in India and the Pre-school Settings

To date the objectives for the ICDS that were developed in the 1970s remain the same (with the later addition of provision for adolescent girls in 2000-2001). They are:

1. To improve the nutritional and health status of children in the age group of 0-6 years
2. To lay the foundations for proper psychological, physical and social development of the child
3. To reduce the incidence of mortality, morbidity, malnutrition and school drop- out.
4. To achieve effective co-ordination of policy and implementation amongst the various departments to promote child development
5. To enhance the capability of the mother to look after the normal health and nutritional needs of the child through proper nutrition and health education (GoI 2011b:1 )

In line with global recommendations for the expansion of early childhood provision (UNESCO 2000) and the concern for its quality (UNESCO 2006), the ICDS has expanded with a remit for universalization with quality. The 'Focus survey'<sup>2</sup> did identify pre-school education (PSE for 3-6 year olds), one of the specific services provided through the programme, as its weakest component .

In terms of its objectives:

Pre-School Education contributes to the universalisation of primary education, by providing to the child the necessary preparation for primary schooling ...Under this, child centred play way activities, which is built on local culture and practices, using local support materials and developed by Anganwadi workers through enrichment training are promoted. It is considered the most joyous daily activity of the ICDS programme, which is visibly sustained for three

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<sup>2</sup> Focus – i.e. Focus on Children under Six, was a survey of ICDS conducted in May-June 2004 in six states : Chhattisgarh, Himachal Pradesh, Maharashtra, Rajasthan, Tamil Nadu and Uttar Pradesh. It involved unannounced visits in a random sample of approx. 200 anganwadis as well as detailed interviews with about 500 mothers of children under 6 (Dreze 2006:3707).

hours a day. The activities which are undertaken as part of PSE include story telling, counting numbers, free conversations to speak freely and apply their mind in order to organise small activities, painting, drawing, threading and matching colour related to fine muscle coordination and development, reading simple words, writing alphabets words, distinguish objects, recognise pictures etc. The constitution of the PSE kit may vary within a state/UT keeping in view the specific local needs and resources.....(GOI 2011c :26)

According to the 2011 evaluation of the ICDS (GOI 2011c) only 50% of eligible children are enrolled in anganwadi centres of which 'effective' coverage is less than half at 41%, giving rise to issues concerned with access and quality. The most important aspect in the success of PSE is claimed to be dependent on practitioner training and the 'quality' of delivery, which until recently has remained a relatively neglected area (Datta 2005). In the state of Maharashtra (where in Mumbai the data for this study was collected) 97.5% of the practitioners were found to be trained adequately to conduct PSE (NCAER-ICDS Survey, 2009, cited in GOI 2011c). It is against this background that the paper is situated.

#### 4.1 The six anganwadis and their localities

##### *Ghatla, Govandi*

The first locality that I visited was Ghatla, a slum community in an eastern Mumbai suburb, in the hamlet of Govandi. It is a slum that is approximately 25 years old, with a population of 4-5000 people, who are in the main Maharashtran Hindus. Its local economy thrives on small scale service and businesses for example the sale of plastic and car parts, garage services for autos (three wheeled taxis), and general stores. Many of the slum's working population are employed in the local markets as 'kulis' carrying fruit and vegetables for stall holders; or working for the market traders generally.

The working population's average net income is Rs6-7000/month.

##### **Anganwadi 1 in Ghatla:**

The anganwadi occupies a room approx 3x3m. When we arrive the anganwadi worker (AWW) and co-worker are saying prayers with the children who are all dressed in pink uniforms. There are between 20-30 children present, who are between the ages of 3-5; but look much smaller (they look about my son's age - which is 18 months old). They do a minute of meditation and yogic exercise as part of their morning routine. There's a black board and displays are on the wall. They sing nursery rhymes; first teacher initiated and then class initiated followed by individual child contributions, initiated by the teacher. All the children clap after each child's presentation. The activity changes. The children are all given small slates and the practitioner tells me that they will now do numbers (Field notes, Anganwadi 1 in Govandi)

*The visual data for anganwadi one: Strong framing and classification*

In scene 1 'Munni behta' (a Hindi nursery rhyme) practitioners model (Bandura 1977) what and how the Hindi poem should be recited, with all children following the practitioners' gestures and rhyme. The practitioners as transmitters, demonstrate complete control in term of gestures (hand movements), pace, tone and rhythm of the rhyme. The children as receivers observe and model as they hear and copy the rhyme in chorus. In this respect there appears to be a strong framing in the initial part of the session, and the direction of the communication is from the adult to the child.



**Fig 1: Anganwadi 1 – Scene 1 – Reciting rhyme: Munni Behta**



**Fig 1.1: Anganwadi 1 – Scene 1 – Reciting rhyme**

The direction is then reversed as two children are asked to recite a rhyme on their own. In scene 2 ‘Tell a story – Marati’, control again begins with the practitioner and this is followed by one child being asked to recite a story. For most of the session the selection, organisation and pace is controlled by the AWW.



**Fig 1.2 : Anganwadi 1: Scene 2 - Tell a story :Marati**

The two scenes from anganwadi 1 suggest that framing is strong generally because the boundary between what might be transmitted is fixed. There is some agency on the part of certain pupils and for those children the frame weakens, because they can control the transmission of knowledge to other children. They can recite a story and a rhyme (that has not been recited in this session). The remaining class do not really have choice in what is received.

Within this strong framing, this visual data for anganwadi 1 suggests curriculum content is separated, in that there are numbers (on the blackboard and slate activity) , rhymes (scene 1), posters (science), all of which are embedded within skills of listening. The message code seems to be that there are different areas of learning with strong boundary maintenance; signs of a performance oriented curriculum.

#### **Anganwadi 2 in Ghatla:**

This anganwadi is a similar size room to the last one. Again, there are two practitioners present, the child worker and her assistant, with the child worker being the lead practitioner, leading the children's activities. The children are not in uniform this time, but what is striking is that the practitioners combine English and Marati. The rhymes they sing are in English and Marati/or Hindi as are the displays on the wall – English (mainly) combined with key figures from Indian politics. The children do an activity where they name parts of the body in Marati. I am given a written set menu for the children's food and today the children are to be given 'labsi'. 'It is made of wheat and sugar and it will also be distributed to the homes in tiffins', says the AWW. (Anganwadi 2: Field notes and interview AWW).





Fig 2. Anganwadi 2 – Wall displays



Fig 2.1: Anganwadi 2 – Wall displays

In scenes 1 & 2 entitled '*Twinkle, Twinkle*', from anganwadi 2, the pedagogy is once again strongly framed towards the practitioners and the content is an English language nursery rhyme. Similarly in

scene 3 entitled ‘1,2,3,4’, the pedagogy is strongly framed. Practitioners direct, select the content, the pace, when, what and how numbers are said and gestured. This indicates strong framing. All the children observe and model the same content with the same gestures. The content indicates a strong classification: English rhymes and numbers in English. Similarly in scene 4: ‘Watch the pointer: A, B, C, D’ the pedagogy is strongly framed, as practitioners direct, select the content, the pace, when, what and how alphabetical letters are said and gestured.



**Fig 2.2: Anganwadi 2: ‘Scene – Watch the pointer’**

English is a very strong part of what is taught and displayed in anganwadi 2. Whilst the instructions are given in Marati in all the scenes recorded, the content of what is to be learnt is in English. The pedagogy also implies that the children have always to listen first. Listening therefore becomes an important part of learning content in terms of what is to be said, its pace and its rhythm, all of which is practitioner directed. The child as learner seems to be learning to acquire a role as a listener. A similar pattern arises in Anganwadi 3 where the children are predominantly receivers and adults are



transmitters, although there are once again examples where individual children recite to the class.



**Figs. 3 & 3.1: Anganwadi 3 — Reciting rhymes**



The second locality that I visited was Mankhurd. Mankhurd is made up of two residential areas of which one is a slum (that is approximately 20 years old) and the other has a more organised structure, but is still considered a low income neighbourhood. There are approximately 272 anganwadis in Mankhurd and it houses a mixed composition of Muslim, Hindu, backward classes and some members of the Catholic community.

Within Mankhurd I visited the slum Shivneri Nagar which has an approximate population of 3,500 people and a number of sanitation related problems as the child project development officer (CPDO) explained:

CPDO: the area has a lack of infrastructure facilities; with a number of problems associated with the availability of clean drinking water. Water is currently provided by tankers brought in. Some of the roads are not concrete. There is an open drainage system... so the guttering is all open, giving rise to risk of water related infections such as diphtheria (Interview: CPDO. Shivneri Nagar , Mahnkurd)

I visited three anganwadis in Shivneri Nagar. The first one (anganwadi 4) took the form of a rented room within a house, let out to AWW workers for approximately Rs500 per month.

#### **Anganwadi 4**

When we arrive at the house the children are singing nursery rhymes and doing the actions of various animals as instructed by the child care worker and teacher.

RCD: so what's your usual routine?

AWW: well first we sit them down and pray, then we sing songs; we'll do rhymes and actions like being an elephant, being an animal in water; how the animals walk, being a monkey. Then we'll have lunch and we'll end with a prayer. For homework I ask them to practice what we've done and tell mummy what they've done.... The purpose of this is for practice and so they are to tell their mummy about it (interview: AWW; anganwadi 4)

In anganwadi 4, within the scene 'Pretend to be animals – representation, gesture and space' the lead AWW directs two children to represent two animals. The AWW directs the children in terms of which animal, how to portray the animal with their bodies, that is, where their arms should be, whether they should be crawling and which space should be used.



**Figs. 4 & 4.1: Anganwadi 4 – ‘Pretend to be animals – representation, gesture and space’**

### **Anganwadi 5**

The fifth anganwadi we visit is a room with a sweet shop at the front of it. It is very ‘snug’ and the children have to be quite ordered in such a small space in order to take part in the throwing game that they are playing. Nonetheless they are encouraged by the AWW and her



assistant to knock over the tower that stands on a stool by throwing a soft ball towards it; even the children who are unsuccessful are encouraged. (Anganwadi 5: field notes)



Fig. 5 & 5.1: Anganwadi 5

In Anganwadi 5, the scene entitled ‘stacking cups’ suggests that children are being shown the development of hand–eye co-ordination as a skill. It is not linked to anything else being taught so it is a strong boundary in terms of it being the development of a particular skill through an enjoyable activity. In terms of pedagogy there is a strong boundary between what is transmitted and received. The message code is highly regulated in terms of who decides on how the learning progresses. Overwhelmingly in this sequence it is once again the framing that stands out as strong. The adult selects the child, the adult hands the equipment to the child, the adult prepares the child by standing him/her up, the adult organises who does what and when, that is, the selection and sequence; and the adult initiates the clapping. The locus of control therefore lies with the adult. The choices transmitted and received for the child are given and there is little room for manoeuvre in terms of what the child is told, and when and where. The only choice seems to be how the ball is thrown as it is not modelled. This framing is highly structured (the lack of physical space also limits who can do what).



**Fig 5.2: Anganwadi 5 - Scene – Stacking cups**

I ask the practitioner (AWW) about her work in the ICDS and her routine.

AWW: ..... Today we have been putting in their minds what they should learn before going to school, what is needed before going to school. That's related to their surroundings, the names of the things around them so that they are aware of their



environment; poems; how they should wash. The habits are formed ..... If the children don't come here, we go and get them. They don't have the habit so we bring them and we show them the charts (points to fruit and vegetables). We make them aware of the sounds and things around them, the animals and where they live..... I am responsible for about 100 children....They don't eat at set times at home, but they do here and then its gets supplemented at home (Interview with AWW: Anganwadi 5- Shivneri Nagar).

### Anganwadi 6

When we arrive at the last anganwadi, the children are about to eat lunch. The wall displays are of published charts written in Hindi.



**Fig. 6 – Anganwadi 6**

The practitioner tells me about her routine.

AWW: We arrive at around 10am and clean up the place before the children arrive at around 10.30 and we sit them down. We begin with prayers. Then I might ask the children about anything special that's happening at home, or if they're wearing new clothes whether they are going somewhere special. Then we might do naming of body parts, some nursery rhymes, and words and actions' (Interview: AWW anganwadi 6, Shivneri Nagar)

The scenes for anganwadi 6 introduce the health related element of the programme where a nutritious food supplement is distributed. Strong framing is demonstrated where adult practitioners control what,

where and when eating occurs and who does what. This is not unusual when compared to most school/educational setting mealtimes in terms of organisation.



**Fig 6.1: Anganwadi 6 - Setting up to eat together**

The scene entitled 'Let's have a drink' contrasts strongly with all previous scenes as it demonstrates one of the few opportunities where the children are not being directed as they leave the room to share in drinking water.





**Figs. 6.2, 6.3 & 6.4: Scene - Let's have a drink - Anganwadi 6**

#### 4.2 Summary of 6 anganwadis

Overall the control over what is expected is high in all anganwadis visited in terms of what is taught and the resources used. The use of the space is weakly classified in the sense that the same space is shared for lesson and food distribution. There is a strong emphasis on the management element of early childhood service delivery. Knowledge of children's learning in all the various ways it exists seems to be reliant on a particular view of learning based on modelling. Sessions were visibly concentrating on academic achievement, whether it be English, number work, language development or skill development which was underpinned by a strong sense of social conduct. The attitude is one of being adult orientated and the children learn what the adult wants. This is an example of strong framing, where practitioners are seen to be positioned as authoritative rather than facilitative. Whilst the instructional discourse was visibly dominant, the analysis has led me to question whether the ability to behave in a certain way is also a sign of performing well in order to be prepared for the habits of schooling to be a good pupil. Consequently the question this raises from a Bernstein oriented framework is: to what extent is the regulatory or competence modality explicitly part of the instructional/performance based discourse in the pre-school element of the ICDS?



## **5. Discussion**

### **5.1 The view of the child as learner**

For Bernstein different theories of instruction are related to the two pedagogic modalities, performance and competence modes of pedagogy (Bernstein, 2000). Performance pedagogies are not concerned with the specific nature of individual students, are explicit about what students are expected to know and what they do not know and the control of teaching and learning is explicit (Bernstein 2000). Performance pedagogy is considered a visible pedagogy since both the evaluative criteria and the control over pedagogy is made explicit to the student. The 'visible' he claims might be theories which are more conservative depending on whether the transmission assumes learning is based on intra individual learning (within the individual) or inter learning (with individuals). The pedagogy is often underpinned by theories from behavioural and cognitive psychology, '....intra individual transmission is likely to select behaviourist theories of instruction...are often regarded as conservative'. (Bernstein 1990/2003 : 73).

In contrast to performance pedagogies, the nature of the individual student is central to competence pedagogies and individual differences as opposed to deficits in knowledge are emphasised. The attainment of the individual's innate competence rather than performance is the object of this form of pedagogy. Students are distinguished by their individual differences and creativity rather than stratified according to performance. The role of the teacher is that of manager of the learning context and the students actively construct meaning for themselves. Competence pedagogy is considered an invisible pedagogy since both the evaluative criteria and the control over pedagogy is implicit. The 'invisible' pedagogy might alternatively be progressive or radical. ... pedagogy inspired by varieties of constructivism (ibid).

### 5.1.1 Learning as a preparation for the primary stage and the view of the child as learner

For Bernstein early reading is crucial to visible pedagogy (Bernstein 1990/2003: 75) and is an early requirement of sequencing skills. It is essential for visible pedagogy because amongst other things, reading allows for independent solitary work and - it makes the child less dependent upon the teacher and gives the child access to alternative perspectives. Furthermore in his analysis of the relation between social class and pedagogic practice he argues that:

..... if children cannot meet the requirements of the sequencing rules and are caught up in the strategies of the repair system, then these children, often the children of the lower working classes (including other disadvantaged ethnic groups), are constrained by the local, context-dependent, context tied skills; by a world of facticity (Bernstein 1990/2003:75)

In the pilot work is a view that children will not be able to engage with the primary stage of education until they have mastered the basics in terms of knowledge and attitudes, in order to prepare for primary school. The content is therefore decided on the basis of what children will be required to know when entering the next stage of schooling:

CDPO: It was pre-school education and school readiness. The activities (in the anganwadis) were nursery rhymes, number work and learning about parts of the body. ....the workers usually spend the first hour and a half on numbers and language work so that they are prepared for school, for example so they are able to identify numbers. They are also forming habits – sitting properly (learning to be pupils). Finally they are given supportive nutrients and also learn habits related to cleanliness (Interview with CDPO)

In this respect the content as preparation for primary schooling seems crucial to 'visible' pedagogy of their next stage of schooling. The theoretical view of young children's cognition and how they learn is not one that seems to be underpinned by a social constructivist framework, where young children will not understand simple ideas unless they recognise a framework into which they fit, that is a context, which is often embedded in an invisible pedagogy in English pre-school settings. The predominant view of the child is of being a listener with the competence to understand the 'right way' of behaving. The predominant view of the adult practitioner is to transmit the 'right way' in terms of knowledge and the rules of conduct in social relations. This seems to be the message code which is visible and highly regulated in its discourse underpinned by learning theory associated with a performance mode of pedagogy.

Of course this view of the child requires a cultural context. Sarangapani (2004) has examined the view of the child who attends the middle stages of Indian schooling in order to understand teacher –pupil relationships. In demonstrating a framework for the key features of Indian schools – namely teacher authority and discipline, Sarangapani (2004) argues that whilst authority and discipline are seen as natural and central to school and learning in India, they are not total institutions (Goffman 1961) in which children simply accept the norm. Rather these characteristics have a deep rooted bias that lies outside of the school institution but is a part of everyday life. Thus the local view of childhood and education has a framework which maps onto these practices and both children and teachers are able to use this as a point of reference from which to reproduce in schools. Authority is seen as natural and is used to maintain the moral order through behaviour and discipline which constructs how teachers and pupils are seen by one another. Non-institutionalised relationships whether adult-child, or parent-offspring that children experience before entering into the institution act as a basis of their relationships with adults – and by extension, underpin pedagogic practice. This is essentially how Indian village children come to learn their role in the social expectations of the particular relationship. For Sarangapani (2004) the rational framework for modern education (where we might say that education is a way of releasing one's potential) has not penetrated this framework of beliefs in the village context, and current discourse on childhood and education does not acknowledge these values and beliefs. When considering young children, families and AWW practitioners in the ICDS we might ask, how can current discourse about quality early childhood education acknowledge their framework of beliefs and respond in a language that they understand for the development of quality pre-school provision?

## **6. Conclusion**

In order to enable as many young children as possible to access the best start in life there is a need to understand the infinite and subtle mechanisms by which ICDS pre-school settings send messages to its young children. This is not only important for those young children attending ICDS provision in slum areas, but the principle is important in all forms of pedagogic practice. Understanding the meaning of the pedagogy is a step to understanding what counts as being valued in a setting. In taking

part in the activities, the young children are socialised into those activities and expected competencies that the settings value. From this perspective early years' settings are places that generate certain messages. So the object of the study then becomes the meanings of signs for the participants taking part in those settings.

The pilot work has revealed a particular modality that predominates the pre-school element of the ICDS provision through the analysis of researcher generated visual data about pedagogy. The discourse for young children in this pilot work was predominately instructional (performance based) and raises questions about whether the Indian cultural context ensures that the regulatory discourse is explicitly part of the performance based model in the pre-school element of the ICDS. However, there is a need to develop questions concerning the gap in which enabling environments for supporting young children as learners may work together and in preparation for primary schooling, which is the main objective of the PSE element of the ICDS. In his analysis of social class and pedagogic practice, Bernstein (1990/2003) argues that if children are to effectively acquire the school curriculum there are always two sites of acquisition, the school and the home and whilst in later schooling the text book mediates the two; we might raise questions about mother capability (Sen 1999) and mediation (one of the objectives of the ICDS) and how practitioners work with the home to support their children as learners in the development of both visible and embedded invisible pedagogic practices.

To conclude, the analysis of researcher generated visual data in the pilot work has raised the following key questions which may feed into understanding and facilitating contextually focussed ideas about quality pre-school education underpinned by ideas of social justice:

1. What are the meanings of signs for the participants taking part in the ICDS settings and in particular what is relayed to the children by the ICDS pedagogical activities?
2. To what extent is the regulatory explicitly part of the performance based discourse in the pre-school element of the ICDS?

3. How do such discourses acknowledge the framework of beliefs belonging to children, families and practitioners whilst also responding in a language that they understand for the development of quality pre-school provision?
4. How might mother capability mediate how practitioners work with mothers to support their children as learners in the development of both visible and embedded invisible pedagogic practices?

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